

182257

FRA-99-6439-2384

PROJECT WHISTLE STOP

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July 23, '02

Docket Management System
400 7th Street S W - PL-401
Washington D C 20590

02 AUG - 1 AM 11:40

DEPT OF TRANSPORTATION

Submission to your files

We have been speaking to many of the Florida and Federal DOT engineers, plus studied many railroad crossing situations, and would like to suggest the following if not already being considered.

- 1- That where there are only crossbuck signs, that a Stop sign be used, rather than a Yield sign. The Yield allows the vehicle to move, and the driver will have the tendency to try to beat the train.
- 2- Under "NIGHTTIME TRAIN WHISTLE BLOWING BAN", 3.n. , Gate timing...., it seems that the "train enters intersection" should be starting at least the 6 second time. At the 5 second time, the train is entering at the same time as the exit gates are going down. The gates may have to start to descend prior to 1500 feet from the crossing.
- 3- We would like to see added as:
 6. words to the effect: that if a crossing has had no accidents for the last 10 years, neither moving nor stopping on the tracks, that this crossing be an exception to the various requirements such as center median, but should be left as is. We can hardly improve on that situation. By the way, we do not say to take the horn off the train. It can still be used in an extreme emergency, but we do not see it doing any good if there are other warning devices and the drivers do not have moving accidents at that crossing.
 7. words to the effect: that if there is a crossing consisting of a single lane roadway in each direction next to each other, and without a center median, that it be acceptable to have long enough arms at both sides of the tracks, to span the entire two lanes. Just as a quadrant gate timing is set for the entrance and exit gates to go down 1 second apart, so can this descent be done.

We examined such a situation at Scottdale, Ga., crossing No. 279941U where they have gate arms about 70 feet long across 2 lanes of traffic. They had no moving accident since 02/08/82. That is 20 years. It speaks well for this system.
 8. words to the effect: that if a center median cannot be 200 feet long because there is a street preventing that to happen, and there had been no moving accidents for at least 10 years with the present center median, that this be considered an exception to the 200' requirement.

Since we are looking to create safe situations, it may be worth while looking into the following:

Where are the tracks? May we also suggest, in order to reduce the number of vehicles stopping on the tracks, that in addition to posting signs which read "DO NOT STOP ON TRACKS", that the tracks be delineated. You may wish to use a

- 1- reflectorized strip on the ground.
- 2- a reflectorized strip on the gate
- 3- as well as on the sides of the railroad cars.

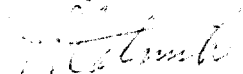
4- We have a crossing at Miami Gardens Drive (N.E. 186th Street) in the City of Aventura, Florida where there are constantly flashing orange lights warning not to stop on the tracks. This is more of a distraction than a warning sign. Wouldn't it be better if these lights would flash **and** a horn (of low decibels) would blow at the tracks, **only** when a vehicle is standing on the tracks. Standing has been the problem at this and many other crossings. The current sign and flashing lights are not good enough.

5- Photo enforcement should be encouraged.

6- As a safety precaution regarding trains carrying Hazardous Materials, it is impossible for a local Fire Department to carry all the materials required to extinguish every type of chemical fire or spread of chemical. Shouldn't the railroad company carry an adequate quantity of antidote for the particular hazardous material which they are carrying? It would be to their benefit because it would reduce casualties and lawsuits.

We would appreciate your looking into each of the above. Please let us know your conclusions.

Sincerely,


Joseph Platnick
encl: photo



6/02

2 Single road lanes in each direction.

Single ~~lane~~ R/R track

Scottdale, Ga. - N. Clarendon Ave, Atlanta, Ga

Crossing Inventory #279941 U

We estimate arm length at 70'

No moving acc. since 02/08/82